

Series: Beginnings, Betrayal, Blessings

Title: A NEW IDENTITY: A Change of Direction, a Change in Destiny

Text: Genesis 17:1-8; 32:22-32; Matthew 16:17-18

Why God changes a Name

How do you pick a name for your children?

Baby name books

- Family name
- By meaning
- Like the sound of it

My family

- **David William** – Both family names
 - David - Beloved
 - William – resolute protector (strong-willed warrior)
 - Foster – to nurture
- **June Ann** – Named after her grandfather and her mother
 - June – Youthful
 - Ann – Grace and Favor
 - Porter - Carrier of loads
- **Brandon Allen** – named because we liked the name and for what it means as well as a family name
 - Brandon – A standard of Fire lifted high
 - Allen – in the valley
 - Foster - Nurturer
- **Brittany Ann** – Our choice, Family name and for meaning
 - Brittany – Grace and Strength
 - spotted
 - Ann – Grace and Favor
 - Foster – Nurturer
 - Bays - a body of water

To remember what has taken place

- Seth – appointed
- Peleg – the earth divided
- Ichabod – the Glory of the Lord departed

To honor God

- Isaiah – Yahweh is Salvation
- Jeremiah – Yahweh will exalt
- Ezekiel – God will Strengthen
- Daniel- God is my Judge

From Abram – High Father, to Abraham - Father of many nations

Genesis 17:1-9

¹ When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, ² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” ³ Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, ⁴ “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.” ⁹ And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.

From Jacob – Supplanter, to Israel – To contend with God

Genesis 32:24-30

²⁴ And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. ²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, “Let me go, for the day has broken.” But Jacob said, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” ²⁷ And he said to him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Jacob.” ²⁸ Then he said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.” ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, “Please tell me your name.” But he said, “Why is it that you ask my name?” And there he blessed him. ³⁰ So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.”

From Simon – God has heard, to Peter - Rock

Matthew 16:15-18

¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The Nation of Israel had a Name Change

Isaiah 62:4 NIV

No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married.

- From forsaken to Hephzibah (Delight)
- From desolate to Beulah (Married)

Isaiah 62:1a, 2 ESV

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not be quiet.....The nations shall see your righteousness, and all the kings your glory, and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give.

Obedient Individuals

Isaiah 56:5 ESV

I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

- Eunuchs will be given a legacy better than sons and daughters

Isaiah 65:15

You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord God will put you to death, but his servants he will call by another name.

- His servants

CHILDREN OF GOD HAVE A NAME CHANGE

Revelation 2:17

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with **a new name written on the stone** that no one knows except the one who receives it.*

Revelation 3:12

*The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, **and I will write on him the name of my God**, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.*

WHERE DO WE FIND OUR IDENTITY?

- **External things**
 - Career
 - Financial success
 - Status
 - Relationship status
 - Married, with children...
 - Identity in being a father or mother
 - Appearance
 - Grades
 - Reputation
- **These may feel like sure foundations**
 - They are not permanent.
 - Often they can come to a close in a very fast way.
 - Loss of job
 - Loss of spouse
 - Loss of a child
 - Loss of financial
- **God is unchanging**
 - He is reliable
 - Same yesterday, today, and tomorrow
 - If you find your identity in Him

It is important, as you define your identity, that **God not be just an aspect of who you are**, like "I am a Christian," or, "I am religious," or, "I am spiritual."

Understanding your identity in God starts with understanding who He is,

- Who he says he is.
- What He says about Himself.
- What He says about you.
- Your identity can be defined by who God is making you to be in His image.

HOW DOES GOD SEE US, WHO BELONG TO HIM?

Your true identity is ultimately based on what God has done for you. In the Bible, God tells us often about how He views His people. Let's take a look at what He says about you, if you received Him as your Lord and Savior.

- You are loved
- You are chosen
- You are forgiven
- You are adopted
- You are redeemed

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT YOUR IDENTITY?

You don't have to take anyone's word for it.

Actually, God wants you to find out for yourself by reading His Word.

- It is so important that you go to the Bible to find out how He feels about you.
- Your identity should never be based on a hope or a guess.
- God gave us His Word, the Bible, so you can know Him and know who He is making you to be in Him.

Ephesians 2:19

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

1 John 3:1

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF BELIEVING IN OUR NEW IDENTITY

Our sin

- Everyone has made mistakes.
- Everyone has sinned. If you accept Christ, God forgives you of these things.

Psalm 103:12-13

¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. ¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.

Messages or Experiences

- You might not remember only what you have done; you may also remember what people have done to you.
- Maybe you were treated poorly or neglected.

- Maybe people told you negative things about yourself.
- The world is broken by sin.
- There are people who have experienced unspeakable injustice.
- From gossip to verbal and physical abuse, outside messages are trying to shape your identity every day.
- **Those outside messages can lead you to believe that you are unworthy** of what the Bible says is true of you in Christ.

False Beliefs

- As you follow Jesus, you will seek to know Him more.
- You can do this through time in the Word, through prayer, through talking with friends or a mentor and through gathering together with other believers in worship.
- As your understanding of God grows, you may recognize flawed beliefs that you held before that do not line up with what you are hearing and learning about your identity now.
- Maybe you grew up learning that you can lose your salvation.
- Maybe you thought that there were certain behaviors or sins that disqualify you from receiving Christ's salvation.
- There are many false beliefs out there that seem correct but really take away from who God is and what He says.
- It can be confusing to work through these differences.

HOW CAN WE RESPOND?

These obstacles are difficult to navigate.

- It's easy to believe that these things are legitimate barriers to following Jesus.
- But by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can overcome these obstacles and live fully in the identity that you were given in Jesus.

Repent

- The word "repent" means that you agree with God.
- So the first thing you can do to embrace your identity is to agree with Him that you are believing things that are no longer true of you.
- Bring the things you are struggling with to Him.
- Admit that they are difficult for you to overcome. Confess that you believe Him when He says that they are no longer true of you.
- Turn around...look the other direction and walk toward that direction.

Grieve

Many places in scripture encourage believers of Jesus to mourn over their sin.

- Although your sin no longer defines your identity, you do still experience its effects in your life.
- Therefore, it is legitimate and even important to grieve the sin that keeps you from truly believing the things Jesus says.

You can also grieve the sins that were committed against you and all that those wounds cost you.

- You can grieve the effect that it had on your relationship with the Lord.
- You can grieve the effect that it had on your relationship with others
- You can grieve the effect that it had on your relationship with yourself.

Paul was one of the leaders of the early church who helped write the Bible's New Testament.

- In a letter to one church, which we now know as the Bible's book of 1 Thessalonians, he talks about how to mourn for lost loved ones.
- He helps us to understand how we can grieve well.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

- In this passage, "those who sleep in death" is referring to followers of Jesus who have passed away.
- Paul says that we can grieve that they are no longer here and yet have hope that in Jesus they live in eternity.

The same principle applies to grief over sin.

- You can grieve your own sin and the sin of others, all the while knowing that you have hope in Christ.
- You are a new creation.
- You are forgiven and restored in Jesus.

Invite the Lord to Change Your Mind

When you have confessed and grieved these things, you can ask God to **help you believe what is true.**

- He is the one who renews your mind and changes your heart.
- God is the one who grows your faith and makes you new.

- Ask Him to help you believe the things that He says of you.
- Ask Him to continue to make you into the person that He intends you to be in Jesus.

He is faithful, and He will do it.

The Lord sees your past identity.

- There are no surprises.
- He knows what he is getting.
- Nothing you have done is hidden.

And wants to call you by a new name

- Change your name to “Bride of Christ.”
- To “Holy People”
- To “Royal Nation”
- “Daughter or Son of God”

Why continue to live by an old and false identity?

Live in this assurance:

That you might have a new direction.

That you might have a new destiny.